

City of the Dead

FROM THE FIRST GLANCE, the mise-en-scène of *The Wire* was *Waterworld* with the water let out, *Mad Max* come back from the future, *The Battle of Algiers* crossed with *Black Orpheus*, or the back streets of *Robocop* where only a metal man dares go. But no, it was just a hopeless stretch of residential Baltimore emptied of jobs, amenities, and civilization before being filled up with black males, not one of whom looked likely to be a candidate for the presidency anytime soon. Instead, they had their minds on drugs: everyone who wasn't using was dealing. When you got into it, however, it soon emerged that Stringer Bell (Idris Elba) would have been an ideal candidate for the presidency, if his naturally fine mind had not been wasted from his childhood by the unremitting violence of his surroundings. Imagine Stringer telling you that a vote for him would stop the rising ocean. From him, you would believe